

Emotions, Transcendence, Differentiated Voices and Resistances at Cape Coast Castle in Ghana: Poetic Analysis

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Abstract

The study discusses experiences of the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade symbolically represented in Ghana by the Cape Coast Castle. It considers the themes of emotions, transcendence, differentiated voices, and resistances characterised tourists' experiences of heritage tourism in Ghana. There is already a small but growing literature on heritage tourism in Ghana. But this literature focuses on econometric insights and little consider the emotions and transcendence, differentiated voices and resistances involved in such heritage tourism. This present study then adopts a novel approach of poetic analysis, by employing research and interpretative poems to analyse the transcribed data. It involved observation and in-depth interviews of 50 informants selected through accidental sampling procedure. The study revealed that the deployment of poetry provides a conduit to express complex, heteroglossic forms of reality that move beyond the conventional methodologies common in tourism research. As such, it has contributed to both local and international theories on heritage tourism.

Keywords: Emotions, transcendence, differentiated voices, heritage tourism, poetic analysis, Cape Coast Castle

Introduction

There is a relentless argument that tourism research, is still steeped in neo-positivistic epistemologies and methodologies (Ateljevic, Bryce, Curran, O'Gorman, & Taheri, 2015; Eshun & Madge, 2012; Goeldner & Ritchie 2012; Hollinshead & Ali, 2009). These strands of argument are often amalgamated within the call for interpretivistic epistemologies employing qualitative methodologies in terms of data collection and analysis (Tribe, 2005; Raghuram & Madge, 2006; Riley & Love, 2000). To Riley and Love (2000), qualitative research has undergone five main stages. First, is the traditional period, which focused on positivistic way of objective truth by omnipresent observers who museumify cultures of the 'other' in grand



and totalising narratives as exemplified by the works of Malinowski. Second, the modernistic phase was post-positivistic in nature and sought to standardise procedures for data collection and analysis. Third, was the ‘blurred genres’ stance, which called for pluralist, interpretative and open-ended perspectives towards thick descriptions of local phenomena. The fourth moment focused on crisis of representations where the self was positioned as integral to the process of knowing. The fifth phase builds on the crisis of representation and focuses mainly on advocacy, activism and writing on localised situations. However, progress in the fourth and fifth phase still remains largely *terra incognita* in tourism research. Explicitly absent is poetic analysis in qualitative tourism research, which falls synchronously in the fourth and fifth phases (Eshun, 2011; Eshun & Tagoe-Darko, 2016).

Interestingly, there is growing literature on heritage tourism in Ghana and elsewhere (Bellagamba, Greene & Klein, 2013; Benton & Zulu Shabazz, 2009; Bruner, 1996; Falola, 2013; Hannam & Offeh, 2012; Mensah, 2015; Richards, 2005; Venkatachalam, 2010). Although these contributions are dominated by qualitative approaches, the focal direction in analysis has been towards thick description (Akyeampong, 2001, Anquandah, 1999; Eshun, 2011; Eshun & Madge, 2012; Eshun & Madge, 2016; Eshun & Tagoe-Darko, 2015; Eshun, Seebaway & Segbefia, 2015; Mawufemor, Eshun & Tichaawa, 2019). Langer and Furman (2004) aver methodological innovations in qualitative tourism research needs to open up to poetic analysis since it can ‘show’ another person how it is to feel something by concretising emotions and lasting moods. Furthermore, literature on heritage tourism has been largely ‘blind’ to issues of resistance alongside the positioning of slave edifices as sites of healing. This paper therefore, makes an original contribution to tourism literature by teasing out the nexus of emotions and transcendence, differentiated voices and resistances at the core of heritage tourism through the lens of poetic analysis. This contribution is significant because while the traditional methods are not able to capture the transcendence behind the emotions (manifestations of the cry of the soul), and the differentiated voices and resistances that, as indicated, form the core of heritage tourism, the poetic approach is able.

Conventional accounts on the triangular trade

Conventional accounts

The expansion of mines and plantations in the New World demanded increasing labour from the Native Americans and the Europeans (Fage, 1969). However, drudgery and diseases decimated thousands of them (Mensah, 2015). The demand for *carte blanche* labour led to Africa becoming an ideal source of labour through slavery. Cannon (2008) recounts how two ethical concepts, namely the missiology of imminent parousia and the theologic of racial normativity embedded the literature of slavocracy. Missiology of imminent parousia connotes, “the link created between biblical urgency and cultural reasoning that legitimates the mission strategies of Christian imperialists”.

In other words, European expansionists perpetrated human trafficking that synchronised the Christian understanding of parousia (imminent second coming or return of Christ as a judge to terminate this world order), with the early church’s preaching of a universal Christophany, which is known as “the great commission” based on Matthew 28:18-20 (Cannon, 2008:128-129). As a result, for three good centuries, the missiological of imminent parousia became the standardised criterion of “European false justification with vicious consequences for more than 12 million Africans who embarked on hellish voyages to the Americas in wretched, suffocating, demeaning conditions, shackled and chained as marketable commodities” (Cannon, 2008:129).

Equally important is the concept of theologic of racialised normativity, which has a unique history in Christianity. As a theological idea, it is a structured white supremacy ideology that makes Caucasian people of European descent the special superior race ordained by God “while crafting subordinate status justifications for people of African descent as natural-slaves ...” (Cannon, 2008:130-131). “Maddeningly” fuelled by this theological idea, “sellers and buyers alike hypothesised that the mental and spiritual deficiencies of Africans would be corrected under the tutelage of Christians, who knew how to discipline black bodies without distinguishing the life within. Carefully calibrated violence and perverse cruelties were excused atrocities” (Cannon, 2008:132) meted out to the slaves. Bruner (1996:291) re-emphasises that the “spirits of the Diaspora” are tied to the slave buildings. However, as we shall see, the probing question is; are Whites, African Americans and Africans so different in the emotions they exhibit at the Castle?

The triangular trade

The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (TAST) is also known as triangular trade because it involved three main continents: Africa, Europe and the Americas (Akyeampong, 2001; Anquandah, 1999; Richards, 2005; Venkatachalam, 2010).

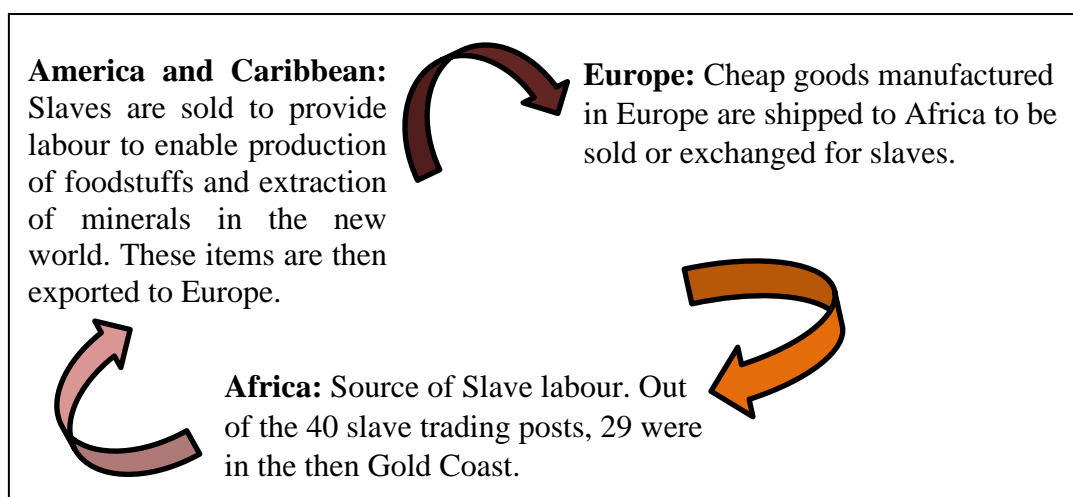


Figure 1. Overview of the Triangular Trade *Source:* Modified from Eshun (2011)

TAST started in the mid-1440s, and became entrenched when the Portuguese had become well established in Brazil; and the Spanish on the mainland of South, Central and North America and the English, French, Dutch, Danes and Spanish on the islands of the Caribbean Sea (See Figure 1). The TAST was initially done by contracts called ‘asientos’, which were issued by the Spanish government between 1543 and 1834 to merchants (Eshun, 2011). The slave merchants needed trading posts and warehouses for holding the slaves, which led to unprecedented new constructions and expansion of existing trade fortresses along the West Coast of Africa. It took 50 years to build the three storey of the Cape Coast Castle. Elmina Castle which is in Ghana, built in 1472 remains the oldest European fortress on the continent.

However, Fort Amsterdam at Kormantse also in Ghana remains the fortress built specifically for the TAST in 1631 (Opoku-Agyemang, 2000). This notwithstanding, the Cape Coast Castle, was the headquarters of the busiest slave port in Africa transporting about 70,000 slaves per annum to the Americas prominently by the Royal African Company and the Company of Merchants Trading to Africa (Fage, 1969). Cape Coast Castle has five male dungeons, where male captives were confined in groups of 200 per dungeon. The Castle has



two female dungeons, where captives were confined in groups of 150 per dungeon. Each dungeon has roughly the size of a 30-by-15-foot (Table, 1).

Table 1. A Brief Chronology of Events at the Cape Coast Castle

Date	Event
1653	First built with wood and named Fort Carolusburg after King Charles X of Sweden, to trade in timber and gold by the Swedish Africa Company
1664	Taken over by the British
1663	Captured by the Dutch and then re-captured by the English in 1664
1681	Castle attacked by the locals
1703	Bombarded by the French fleet and again in 1757
1877	British colonial administration moved to Christiansburg Castle
1920s	The Castle was restored by the British
1957	Castle comes under the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board
1972	Designated as World Heritage Site and Museum established
1990s	Restoration of Elmina and Cape Coast Castles with funds from UNDP, USAID, and with technical assistance from Smithsonian Institution and International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)
1999	Archaeological Excavation shows shackles, vomit etc
1998	Two remains of old diaspora brought to the Castle
2009	Barack Obama and family visit the Castle

Source: Fage (1969)

The Castle has condemned cells, where rebellious captives were deprived to death. The slaves were sold in the Palaver Hall of the Castle. They were then passed through doors called ‘Door of No Return’. Three passages connect the Castle: the outward passage, where European ships with goods arrived and exchanged for slaves. About 1000 men and 300 women slaves were imprisoned in the Castle for any given three months’ period, before being exported to the New World (Simmonds, 1973). The middle passage involved the shipment of slaves to especially North America and the Caribbean (Bellagamba et al., 2013). Although the Dolben Act 1788 sought to better the condition of the slaves in the cargo ships, they still remained as floating hell. The return passage involved the European ships transporting products such as rice, sugar cane and cotton to Europe. About 11 million African slaves are estimated to have been transported to the New World. Perbi (1995) indicates that Ghana alone provided about 16% of the total slave shipped to the USA from 1620 to 1807 (Table 2).

Table 2. An overview of estimates of slaves during TAST

Slaves transported from the Whole of Africa		
Year Category	The Estimates of Slaves from Africa	Approx. average numbers of slaves per year.
Up to 1600	330, 000	2,200
1601-1700	1,560,000	15,600
1701-1810	7,520,000	68,400
After 1810	1,950,000	32,500
Total	11,360,000	118,700
Approximate Average numbers of Slaves taken from Africa per year during the 1780s		
West African coasts	Annual numbers	Approximate percents
Senegambia	2,200	} 7.0%
Sierra Leone region	2,000	
Grain and Ivory Coasts	4,000	
Gold Coast	10,000	9%
Slave Coast to Benin	12,500	14%
Niger Delta and Cameroon	22,000	25%
All other part of Africa	40,300	45%
Total	93,000	100%

Source: Fage (1969:83-88)



Actually, the TAST was unique for three foremost considerations: the duration (nearly 400 years of trade), the category of slaves (including women, children and men, with the majority of them ranged between 15 and 35 years of age) and its intellectual legitimisation (Anquandah, 1999; Perbi, 2005). Although the trade was abolished by the British in 1807, Akyeampong (2001) gives the case of the Anlos in the then British Togoland, to buttress his claim that the trade continued ‘illegally’ right to 1856. On the abolition of the TAST, the Castle resumed its original trade in mainly gold, ivory and spices.

The Castle holds the graves of George MacClean the British colonial governor from 1830-1844, his wife Leticia Elizabeth Landon who died three months after joining the husband, C.B Whitehead, a 38-year old British soldier who was killed by a Dutch soldier in the courtyard, and Phillip Quarcoe, a Gold Coaster sent by the British Colonial administration to study in England, who became the first African priest of the Church of England. As high as between 300 and 700 Europeans are estimated to have died in the Castle annually. This notwithstanding, the number of Africans who died during the middle passage, in the raids for slaves and on the various routes to the slave edifices still remains non-existent in literature (Richards, 2005). A vigil is kept at the Castle on the 31st July every year to remember the slaves who died in captivity.

Heritage tourism in Ghana

Heritage tourism is frequently regarded as an activity by tourists in a space where historic artefacts are presented (Richards, 2005). Poria (2001) however, argues that heritage tourism should be understood based on the relationship between the individual and the heritage presented as well as the tourists’ perception of the site as part of their own heritage. In Africa, heritage tourism is closely linked to diasporic travel. There are two main types of the diaspora in Africa. First, the ‘older diaspora, which includes the diaspora of post-enslavement (Eshun, 2011; Zeleza, 2011). Second, the ‘new African diaspora’ which forms about 12% of the Ghanaian population, are African diaspora’ during colonisation, decolonisation and out-migrants of the Structural Adjustment Programmes in the 1980s (Zeleza, 2002). The new diaspora is often referred to locally as ‘boggers’ or ‘overseas Ghanaians’ (Eshun, 2011). Coles and Timothy (2004) give three ways through which diaspora and heritage tourism meet: roots, routes and routine. Roots involve the attachment to ones ‘home’ country; akin to ‘ancestral travel’ or ‘genealogical travel’. The routes involve the experiences of their migrational histories, whilst the routine involves the experiences of the displaced people in the host country. Diasporic travel in Africa is often based on root travel (Mensah, 2015). Garvey’s ‘Back to Africa’ campaign (1920), the Pan-Africanism of the 1900s and the Afrocentricity of the 1980s-1990s heightened the interest of the African diaspora towards visiting Africa. In 1957, Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana’s first president, extended an invitation to the African diaspora to come, stay and work in Ghana (Eshun, 2011).

Along the years, Ghana has received personalities like W.E.B. Dubois, Maya Angelou, Martin Luther King Jr, Coretta Scott King, Mohammad Ali and Malcolm X. Indeed, Rita Marley, Louis Armstrong and Isaac Hayes have all traced their roots to Ghana. In the 1960s, Ghana evoked so strong image among the African Americans that some of the early pilgrims kissed the soil after landing from their planes (Bruner, 1996; Pellow & Chazan, 1986). Furthermore, Kofi Annan’s erstwhile position as the Secretary-General of UN deepened Ghana’s attractiveness in the African diaspora. Feelings (1972) thus refer to visiting Ghana as ‘Black Pilgrimage’. Ghana’s leadership role in Pan-Africanism is further shown in the ‘Fihankra Community Initiative’, which seeks to provide residence to the African Diaspora. Through the ‘Fihankra Initiative, with a nominal fee of \$195 and an annual property tax of



\$395 each diaspora member may have access to one 929m² plot of land for settlement in Ghana (Reed, 2015).

In 2011, the top two non-African foreign arrivals included USA (13%) and the UK (9%) (Eshun, 2011). The relatively higher visitor numbers of British is based on Ghana being the first African country to gain independence from Britain. Queen Elizabeth II has visited Ghana twice in 1961 and 1999. To Christie et al. (2013) and Pierre (2013), Ghana is an emerging destination and the slave edifices will continue to position the country as an attractive destination for Diasporan Africans. Indeed, on the 11th June 2009, the first African-American President of the USA, Barack and his wife Michelle Obama, mother-in-law, the two daughters visited the Castle as part of his first State Visit to sub-Saharan Africa. Currently, 10,000 African Americans visit Ghana annually (Mensah, 2015). In 2019, 400 years after the first slave transport to the Northern Hemisphere, specifically, Jamestown, Virginia in the USA, Ghana launched the novel Project of Year of Return (YoR), to the African diaspora especially in the Americas and Europe, to recognise their resilience and achievements, to return home and see Africa, take advantage of business opportunities and the possibilities for dual citizenship for them. The YoR further buttressed Ghana's leadership in Pan-Africanism and the country's novelties in attracting the diasporic market. The Project attracted many personalities such as Steve Harvey, Michael Jai White, Naomi Campbell, Kofi Kingston, Rick Ross, Rosario Dawson and Adrienne-Joi Hohnson among others.

Materials and method

The UK and USA register the highest percentage of international tourists to Ghana. The Cape Coast Castle despite its neglect in the 1970s sits within this relationship in three main areas. First, the Castle was the busiest Britain post during the TAST. Second, the Castle along with Elmina Castle were the first places where the British started what became known as the Castle Schools, to educate some locals which formed the foundation for formal education in Ghana. Third, Cape Coast was the capital of Gold Coast and the Castle was the British colonial administration block till they moved it to Accra in 1877 (Eshun, 2011; Pellow & Chazan, 1986). Despite the rise in backpackers to the Castle, often tourists to the fortress travel in groups, which makes it odd to delay a member unduly in a study. Thus, through convenient sampling, 50 respondents were involved in the study; including 15 African visitors, 15 African American visitors, and 15 White visitors along with five workers at the Castle. This was supplemented by general observation research technique. Mkono (2013) emphasises quite rightly that previous studies on attractions in Africa, seem to position Africans as 'toured people', although their responses as 'tourers' could help to present alternative worldviews on a phenomenon under study.

Furthermore, the study whilst categorising the respondents into Africans, African Americans and Whites were not blind to their heterogeneity and complex identities (Eshun, 2011; Zeleza, 2002). Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) argue sample size in qualitative research is far outweighed by the importance of 'saturation' i.e. the point at which no new information in terms of themes, and differences in perceptions are identifiable in subsequent responses. The White visitors were mainly from USA, UK, Canada and Germany. Thus, the interviews lasted between 15 and 20 minutes, and with prior permission from the interviewees, some of their responses were audio recorded. Relevant literature supplemented the data obtained through interview.

Poetic analysis in tourism research

Poetic analysis offers an alternative to the predominance of 'thick description' in qualitative analysis by critiquing the god(dess)-trick and Western ontological privileging of reason over



emotions (Eshun, 2011; Eshun & Madge, 2012; Tribe, 2005). Poetic analysis thus refuses to fit reality into binaries of real/unreal, living/not-living, physical/spiritual to forge a vision of a world shaped by the remembrance of fragments of life (Eshun & Madge, 2012). Prendergast, Leggo and Sameshima’s (2009) biographical research on poetic analysis in social sciences revealed three main categories. First, *vox theoria* (i.e. literature-voiced poems) where the poetic analyses are responses to works of literature and they formed 13% of the bibliography. Second, *vox autoethnographia* (i.e. researcher-voiced poems) where the poetic analyses focus on data from field notes, journal entries and autobiographical writing and they formed 49% of the bibliography. Third, is *vox participare* (i.e. participant-voiced poems), where the poetic analyses focus on data interviews and other words of mouth and they formed 35% of the bibliography. Due to the sparseness of tourism study under the *vox participare* genre (Eshun & Madge, 2012), this paper’s contribution is anchored here.

However, irrespective of the poetic analysis, creation of poems involves two distinct activities namely; inspiration and craft. Epistemologically, the inspiration aspect gives a study poem(s) its legitimacy, which contains within itself the initial seeds of a poem (Eshun, 2011; Eshun & Madge, 2012; Eshun & Madge, 2016). The craft considers three main areas namely the message, medium and the context in the creative process. The message covers the theme of a poem embedded within the research aims. The medium involves the style, mood and diction. The context involves the researcher’s positionality, his or her visions and issues of global politics (Mock, 1998). Cahnmann (2003:30) cautions that researchers using “poetic practices need to share their processes and products to the entire research community”. This stance re-echoes the concept of a continuum which among its other tenets seeks for explanation about the processes of data collection and analysis (Eshun, Seebaway & Segbefia, 2015; Manful & Eshun, 2015; Eshun, Tichaawa & Appiah, 2018).

Poetic analysis first involves transcribing the primary data. The next stage is the intimacy and analytical distance with the amalgam of text. The intimacy involves thematic analysis of the data and detecting consistent emerging themes. The distance involves leaving the emerged themes for at least a week so the researcher could mull over the themes and come back to them with ‘fresh eyes’ (Langer & Furman, 2004). Research poems are then created directly from the emerged themes, where respondents are positioned as the primary transmitter of data in compressed form. The research poems are usually recorded and played over several times and revised for any ‘grit’. Poetic analysis thus seeks not to simply “write up” research (i.e. a mechanistic format akin to a plot summary) but as a creative production of knowledge, an open strategy of discovery enacted through intuition that leads to producing a holistic work cohering at multiple levels of meaning (Richardson, 1994). However, this adherence to conveying respondents’ voices limits a researcher’s interpretations of a phenomenon. An interpretative poem therefore may be created to incorporate a much larger scope of analysis, including various perspectives, secondary data and the primary data (Eshun & Madge, 2012). Ultimately, both types of poems may be employed in different types of study, or in the same study to confer different advantages (see Table 3).

Table 3 The two main types of poems in poetic analysis

Research Poems	Interpretative Poems
Based solely on primary data	Based on primary and secondary data etc.
Often is longer in length	Relatively shorter in length
Relatively easy to understand, because it is based on direct responses	May be more difficult since it is more nuanced and subtle in creation
Less reliance on poetic devices	Relatively higher use of poetic devices
Finds out what respondents said and say (re-present) back to them	Finds out what respondents’ said and say (re-present) back <i>with</i> them

Source: Eshun & Madge (2012)



Also, although both research and interpretative poems are not used as generalisable data analysis tools, if a poem shows some truth with a research population then it is transferable by its own merit. To Robinson and Lynch (2007:239), poetry can make the interior life of an individual available to others; thus, poetry can create “a universe”.

Results and discussion

Emotions and transcendence

In 1999, archaeologists from Ghana excavated faeces, shackles, bones and vomits that covered over 30cm thick on the dungeon floors of the Cape Coast Castle (Osei-Tutu, 2011). Also, excavation in one of the dungeons showed large numbers of clay pipes (Simmonds, 1973). These pipes were used to administer tobacco to the captives to ‘drive away melancholia’— a condition of depression and sadness. Currently, Cape Coast Castle and Elmina Castle have become pilgrimage sites, especially during the biannual festival called the Pan-African Theatre Festival (PANAFEST), which commenced in 1992. PANAFEST is a cultural event held in Ghana to promote Pan-Africanism and development across Africa. The castles also hold museums showing arts and ‘cultural’ objects, including shackles, branding tools, muskets, cannons and mortars. In 1998, Ghana’s Ministry of Tourism also packaged Emancipation Day to encourage the African Diaspora to return to Ghana and celebrate a sense of healing on 1st August every year. Furthermore, Ghanaians participate in the Black History Month and Juneteenth celebrations (a commemoration of 19th July 1865, when the Emancipation Proclamation finally reached the slaves in Texas).

A visit to a site such as the Cape Coast Castle therefore often evokes profound emotions that poetry seems to be the most suitable conduit to unpack. These emotions distil pains that millions of African slaves went through in the inhuman bondage. Pain, and for that matter, physical pain, according to Elaine Scarry, does not only defy linguistic expression. It also destroys it and thus “bringing about an immediate reversion to a state anterior to language, to sounds and cries a human being makes before language is learned” (Scarry, 1985:4; Gedzi, 2003: 11; Eshun & Madge, 2012). This is why there is the need for an invention of linguistic structures such as poems as devices that could reach out and accommodate this area of experience hitherto inaccessible to language. This venture is even more crucial if we take into consideration that a person in pain is practically unable to express verbally what is happening to him. This is because these emotional experiences are manifestations of the cry of the soul that transcends linguistic expression; an experience that connects victims of atrocities and those who now observe the instruments of torture, the castle (Gedzi, 2003). For Elaine Scarry, “physical pain is not identical with (and often exists without) either agency or damage, but these things are referential. This is why we often call on these to convey the experience of the pain itself” (Scarry, 1985:15).

Scarry (1985) argues that the use of imagined or real agency such as the Castle in the context of this research can objectify and even make sharable what is originally a personal experience of past and dead slaves. Additionally, Scarry (1985:18) suggests that in torture “it is the obsessive display of agency that permits one person’s body to be translated into another person’s voice.” Thus, marks left on tortured bodies, and in the context of this study, the Castle and its accessories, speak volume of what millions of African slaves went through. To a great extent, they are objective testimonies to inexpressible pain. They uncover a painful story that does no longer belong to a group of persons or slaves; it belongs to all who witness it – whether experientially first-hand or not (Gedzi, 2003).

Barack Obama’s speech after his about an hour tour of the Castle in 2009, had the punchline: “as bad as history can be, it is possible to overcome’. This became a useful refrain in the created research poem. Also, a recurring theme from the interview responses was that



the Castle is “a must see in Africa”, which became a useful motif in the created research poem. In addition, during an interview at a hotel in Cape Coast, an interviewee opened her purse and showed a two-pound coin issued by the UK government on the bicentennial celebration on the abolition of the TAST in 2007. In creating the research poem, the researchers used brackets to symbolise the broken chain. Eshun (2011) adds that through symbolism, a poem can convey the essence of an emotion which often transcends the schism between emotion and its expression in language.

The poem is a primary data collected by the researchers from the field location, the Cape Coast Castle, that has been transcribed into a poetic narrative to mirror the mood of informants as they expressed their feelings, and also the general emotional climate around the unit of analysis. The research poem argues that to the African Americans, a visit to the Castle embodies a soul finding exercise (Poem 1: Stanza 3).

A Must See in Africa—
Visiting this Castle is like funeral,
I stare blank at the beach and fisherfolks.
I tell you, White visitors on a tour
Do sometimes muffle our personal bonding
As the indubitable horrendous memories splutter
And with naked honesty
This place peels to the soreness of our Roots beyond words
But as bad as history can be

(Source: Eshun, 2020 based on the study data)

An exercise which also reminisces how Henry the Navigator (architect of the TAST) saw conversion and enslavement as interchangeable terms; and experienced ‘no cognitive dissonance in using Christianity as a civilising agent for making converts into slaves (Cannon, 2008:127). This stance underscores a key informant, Barack Obama’s avowal after touring the Castle: “you connect with self that you might not even be aware it was there”. Indeed, other informants, African Americans indicated maintaining a personal bonding with the Castle as their ‘last home’ before the middle passage hence the ‘Symbolic Umbilicus’ (see Poem 1: Stanza 2, line 3).

A Must See in Africa—
I am an African American...
You stand face to face with a Symbolic Umbilicus
Not even Ellis Island in New York comes close to this
We are here just like Senator Lee Queen Nonsa of Swaziland did...
The shrine in the Male Dungeon
Makes us drum cover-up silences and libations!
Barack and Michelle unveiled a Plaque,
On this incredible and tragic part of world history
But as bad as history can be
It is possible to overcome

(Source: Eshun, 2020 based on the study data)

The research poem therefore touts Ghana as root destination for the African diaspora. Martin Luther King’s sermon “The Birth of a New Nation”, underscores Ghana’s strong historical ties with especially African Americans. In February 2015, Ghana hosted Pan-African Summit, which continues to highlight Ghana’s strong historical ties with the African Diaspora.

At the core of this historical tie are the slave edifices which evoke unstinting emotions (Poem 1: Stanza, 1). One African American informant buttresses, “I found myself shaking as



if my ancestors were whispering into my ears, whereas my Ghanaian friend stood there relatively unruffled, I guess the Castle worked on us differently”.

A Must See in Africa—
The Dungeons, Condemned Cells...
I have seen full grown men women shed tears
A visitor gagged wailed vomited
Through this gut-wrenching heart-provoking visit.
The Door of No Return salt-bathing in the eyes of sun
As you gaze on humans’ brutality on humans.
It simulated me intellectually and spiritually,
And drained me emotionally.
But as bad as history can be
It is possible to overcome

(Source: Eshun, 2020 based on the study data)

In 2009, the tour guide informant said, “Obama was saddened by the history behind the Castle, and for most of the time on his tour, he was quiet”. However, one of the most cogent display of emotion was made by an informant, Steve Harvey, who after touring the Cape Coast Castle and Elmina Castle in 2019, also stated poignantly that, “I could feel my ancestors on me... Powerful beyond words that I can explain. I encourage as many of you as possible to go Home for your ancestors. Their strength is in each of us and we must honour their ultimate sacrifice in all that we do”.

It is however worth noticing that, three main issues manifest in the contestations on the emotion and its transcendence at the Castle. First, the African American informants argue that the preservation exercise at the Castle is a façade to trivialise its history through commoditisation. They are overtly against the earlier painting of the Castle and any attempt of doing the same as well as the provision of lighting system and gift shops at the Castle. In the 1990s, a demand by the African American visitors led to the removal of the restaurant in the Castle (Richards, 2005). This stance, however, overlooks earlier preservation works on the Castle by the Monuments and Relics Commission of the Gold Coast. For example, the British walled up the entrance of the tunnel that led to the ‘Door of No Return’ after the abolition of the trade to prevent illegal trade that seemed to be carried on still in the Castle (Mensah, 2015). Currently, Okofo Kwaku and his wife Imahkus Nzingah, African Americans resident in Ghana, commoditise the slave Castle through their tour companies, “One Africa Productions Tours and Specialty Services Limited” to attract the African diaspora to visit Ghana.

Stanley-Price and King (2009:65) therefore warn stakeholders on heritage tourism to avoid “blind fetishism for historic fabric”, which involves unneeded zeal to preserve original states of heritage sites. They gave the example of the Goethe House in Frankfurt which was destroyed during the World War II, where some experts bemoaned the re-construction as negating its originality. However, the re-construction has enabled visitors to have a feel of the edifice and its relevance for Germans and beyond. Cohen (1988) therefore surmises that commodification may actually help to maintain identities of places and people by generating demand for and attributing value to them, thereby preserving their relevance from degradation. The question that remains is at what level of commoditisation is it useful for the continual preservation of the Castle. To Steiner and Reisinger (2006) debate on originality borders on authenticity, which they contend is socially constructed, and thus is not an uncontested term. From Wang’s (1999) typology on authenticity, the African Africans’ actually seek for existential authenticity.

Second, the African Americans feel excluded from the restoration of the slave edifices (Brunner, 1996). Reed (2005) shows in a survey that, 35% of respondents of Africans and



Diasporan Africans preferred dungeon being added to the castle, whereas 30% suggested dungeon only. Earlier in the 1990s, the African Americans demanded the Ghanaian authorities to add dungeon to the official names of Cape Coast and Elmina Castles to emphasise the ‘African holocaust’. However, the Ghanaian authorities declined this demand, arguing that it may muffle the different histories associated with the Castles. In 1994; Ghana’s National Commission on Culture, organised a conference between 11th and 12th May, towards addressing how the competing interests on the slave edifices could be couched into *desideratum* (Bruner, 1996).

From the conference report, the slave edifices were to be left in their original state. Nevertheless, there have been periodic paintings of the Castle in the bid to attract more African and White visitors. Furthermore, in 1992, African American Society to Preserve Cape Coast Castle, represented by Isaac Hayes, pledged to raise US\$10 million to support the restoration of Cape Coast Castle, however, this project never materialised. Definitely, there still exists a subtle struggle for ownership of the slave castles between the African Americans and Ghanaians (Bruner, 1996). In 1972, UNESCO initiated the World Heritage Convention to preserve sites of great significance for the World, the World Heritage Committee under the UNESCO, however, accord universal ownership of World Heritage Sites irrespective of their territorial location (Stanley-Price & King, 2009).

Lastly, the Castle presents a space for catharsis. Tensions sometimes mount among the visitor categories to the Castle (Bruner, 1996; Richards, 2005; Eshun, 2011). Sutton (2010) emphasises the need to achieve a useful balance between ‘truthfulness’ and ‘tastefulness’ at heritage tourism site to help reduce tensions. To Sutton (2010), the truthful facet (both in material and narration) touts eschewing dominant-favoured presentations on a heritage site, whilst the tasteful facet seeks more inclusive and cathartic presentations. For example, a plaque at the Castle reads “May humanity never again perpetuate such injustice against humanity” which is often quoted by tour guides to visitors towards quietening negative emotions. As a consequence, the poetic analysis evokes a reader’s humanity and allow for a visceral resonance that provides an arena for reflexivity that eludes the binary of ‘victim’ and ‘victimiser’ to a whole gamut of the possibility of healing and our common humanity (Sherry & Schouten, 2002).

Differentiated voices

In African societies authority personalities *inter alia* chiefs, community elders and linguists are seen as “living libraries”, because they hold vast repertoires of local histories. The tour guides assume a similar position, parading ‘communal history’. Moreover, there are no signs around the Castle which makes the services of tour guides inevitable. Indeed, the tour guide, who gave the Obamas’ tour around the Castle has become a celebrity of a sort and is often recommended to potential visitors. To the White and African visitors, tour guides at the Castle are contributing greatly to visitors’ experience. The study therefore based on the data collected, composed a research poem. For example in the Poem 2: Stanzas 1 & 2, the role of tour guides in creating a formidable moment-of-truth and delighting visitors was overtly made clear.

One major disappointment in Africa
Is museums, monuments—
Do not match up to their histories
Cape Coast Castle is an exception.
The tour guides are sublime
See their endless ripples
Of African culture and history.

As a visitor with African heritage
My learning of African history here



Evokes Harlem on my mind
See the burial place of the Whites
But only wreaths in the Dungeon
For the Africans who died in there

(Source: Eshun, 2020 based on the study data)

Mensah (2015), also re-echoes that the tour guides possess repertoire of history on the castle along with top-notch sensitivity of feelings to tourists. However, the African Americans claim that the presentations of the tour guides are sometimes superficial and overly commoditised. They further maintain that the tour guides spread ‘fixated stories’ to satisfy especially the White visitors. Currently, the African and White visitors interpret the greying paints on the Castle as neglect by the management. Consequently, to the White visitors’ renovations done to the building may even heighten their perception of experience (Bellagamba, 2013; Mensah, 2015; Prendergast et al., 2009). However, the African Americans claim the building should be left in its original state. The poem thus highlights the competing voices of the visitors which became a confluence in (Poem 2: Stanza 3).

They Say walls have Ears
And not Mouths to Speak!
But at Elmina Castle or Cape Coast Castle
You see our Common Humanity
In the Ears of the Whites
And Ours: The Walls Speak!

(Source: Eshun, 2020 based on the study data)

Dann (1996) argues quite misguidedly that the use of poetry in tourism tends to create a ‘euphoric language’ of tourism that may alienate other competing voices and realities.

Resistances

Bhabha (1990), avers the oppressed always devise various resistances, *inter alia* rebellion, mimicry and hybridity. Thus, in the process of reorienting heritage tourism through poetic analysis, a space is prised open to uncover the resistances involved in the TAST. Although movies such as “Roots” (based on Alex Haley’s biography in 1976) and “Amistad” (based on slave rebellion led by Sengbe Pieh in 1839) embody resistances of the slaves, cinematography has been largely passive to issues of resistances. For example, the 2013 movie: ‘12 Years in Slavery’, based on Solomon Northup’s re-enslavement, represented largely the slaves as acquiescing to their oppressions, which belittled their resistances in favour of the narratives of domination. The interpretative poem therefore echoes resistances of the slaves and contemporary resistances at the Castle. The first resistance against the TAST involved the Africans’ protests and struggles against slave raiders. For example, in 1526 King Nzinga Mbembe of Congo wrote to the King of Portugal to request him to stop his men from buying slaves in his Kingdom. Second, the slaves did stage rebellion. For example, some of the women captives refused sexual demands from slaveholders and were therefore sentenced to the condemned cells.

Additionally, cases of rebelliousness were recorded during the middle passage. Third, involved slave revolts in the New World by notably Gabriel Prosser and Nat Turner (1831) and the frequent slave revolts recorded in Barbados (1816), Brazil (1828-1837), Bolivia (1840), Cuba (1844) and Jamaica (1861). There were also escape strategies; the Underground Railroad as epitomised by Harriet Tubman who helped over 250 slaves to escape slavery. Indeed, Fredrick Douglas’s campaign for the slaves to join the American civil war in 1861 itself was a grand escape strategy. Last, there were resistances by some freed slaves—e.g. Ottobah



Cuguano's 1787, "Thoughts and sentiments of the evil of slavery" and Equiano's 1789, "The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano" and Sojourner Truth's speeches mounted pressure on the abolition of the TAST (Eshun, 2011).

Few days before the middle passage, the slaves were branded after the initials of the slave merchants (Brunner, 1996). The beach near the Castle then called European Beach, was a forbidden ground for the local residents during the TAST. The slaves from the Castle were marched through this beach at nights to prevent the local residents from seeing the slave being shipped (Poem 3: Stanza 1, line 7). Consequently, the interpretive poem evokes Las Casa, a priest, who advocated for the abolition of the use of the labour of Native Americans and Europeans, which eventually led to the demand for African slaves (Poem 3: Stanza 1).

The dungeons hummed neem below
As the sugary hymns bellowed
The palimpsest of LasCasa.
Let's speak of the dowryless love
Tiptoeing shadows
Over the waves
Beyond shibboleths of tugs-of-war

(Source: Eshun, 2020 based on the study data)

Stanza 1 of the poem therefore evokes 'neem' and juxtaposed with 'sugary hymns', to re-echo the anguish of the slaves and the innocent hymns sang in the chapel, which was right at the top of the male dungeon. In 1793, the American, Eli Whitney invented the first modern mechanical cotton gin, which increased cotton production and profitability and escalated demand for more African slave labour. Thus, whilst the TAST promoted industries in the New World and Europe, it contributed to stifling of entrepreneurship in Africa. For example, in 1751 the British Board of Trade instructed the "English Resident of Cape Coast to stop the Fantes from cultivating cotton, since the promotion of industry among the natives was contrary to the established policy of England" (Eshun 2011:74).

Also, the role of guns in heightening the TAST is overtly absent in literature. Whatley (2014), however, emphasises that guns supplied by the slave merchants fuelled tribal wars, and the slave raiders subsequently exchanged slaves for guns. African communities not engaging in the TAST were at a huge risk of being attacked and therefore were forced to engage in what Whatley (2014:9) refers to as the "gun-slave-cycle". The total number of guns shipped from Europe to Africa during the TAST was between 300,000 and 400,000 per annum (Inikori, 1977). Inikori (1977), therefore historiographically underscores how guns and gunpowder, and science and technology in general, were integrated in the TAST. This demands that there must be space given to scholarship on how weapons are integral in discourses on heritage tourism or diasporic travel in Ghana. In Ghana, one can poke fun at a Fante by evoking, "Oh Master Gun, I beg you do not shoot me" (see Stanza 2, line 4). Additionally, some Whites showed resistances against the TAST as exemplified by the British Thomas Clark and Granville Sharpe, the Quakers who in 1787 established the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade (SAST), and with personality as William Wilberforce attacked the trade establishment. William Roscoe's poem in 1781, 'Wrongs of Africa' commissioned by SAST also underlines the moral suasion for abolishing the trade. Similarly, Hannah More's 'The Lamentations of a Negro Woman', and others had the sympathy of the Prime Minister William Pitt. Indeed, the landmark ruling by Lord Mansfield that freed James Somerset as a slave in 1772, did lead to 80,000 slaves being freed in Britain.

The success of SAST led to the setting up of the French Society for the Abolition of Slavery in 1834. The locals have also sought to exert their influence on the Castle. Although,



sometimes their efforts are frustrated by other interest groups. For example, there used to be shrine for a local god—Tabir at where the male dungeon was constructed. The Europeans forbade the locals from worshipping at the Castle; thus, the shrine was moved to another location in Cape Coast. In 1973, a shrine for the god was re-built in the male dungeon. However, to majority of African visitors with Judeo-Christian and Islamic faiths, the shrine appears incongruous with their current faiths, which makes some uncomfortable in entering the male dungeon. Contrariwise, to some of the Diasporan Africans, it offers them the opportunity to pray and connect with their ancestors (Mensah, 2015).

Currently, on top of the ‘Door of No Return’ is also a ‘Door of Return’ signpost. This signpost is a subtle resistance as exemplified in 1998, when two ex-slaves bodies were exhumed in USA and Jamaica, and brought back to Ghana through them. This symbolic return is thus referred to in the poem as “The Glorious Door of Return (see Poem 3: Stanza 2).

Behold the Glorious Door of Return.
Yet the frankincense of griots
Yawns like light through a crevice
The heap of ex abundanti cautela
Mimics the hashtag of Never Again
Oh! See the asphyxiating GunPowder...
Sometimes the Tapestry of TimeSpace
Portrays the yarns of Cadence
Of the Ricefields Canefields Cottonfields...

(Source: Eshun, 2020 based on the study data)

However, the exclusive attention on Cape Coast and Elmina Castles has led to the neglect of other slave edifices in Ghana (Stanza 3, line 3). Africa has now over 160 undeveloped heritage sites (Christie et al., 2013). Ghana’s National Tourism Development Plan (2013-2027) adds that most of the country’s historical edifices are in deplorable state. The poem also inextricably contests modern forms of slavery (see Poem 3: Stanza 3).

Oh Yes, we got to Perform the Rainbows
Of our Common Humanity
Beyond nomenclatures of UNESCO
See the Swirls in Champagne Glasses
That tease Brows of Mansfield
Oh! May Humanity attract ants
To Molasses of Rainbows—
As we Jettison Kegs of Vinegar of Injustices

(Source: Eshun, 2020 based on the study data)

To Bales (2004), forced labour, sex trafficking, bonded labour, child labour and domestic servitude involves over 25 million people. The Castle thus symbolises the need for a fairer world as induced similarly by a visit to heritage sites such as Auschwitz and Williamsburg. This line of action demands reassessment of wants of the visitor groups to the Castle whilst maintaining its *genius loci* (Eshun, 2011; Stanley-Price & King, 2009).

Venkatachalam (2010) argues cogently that the TAST remains an appurtenance in the psyches of Africans. Eshun (2011) adds the 1884-85 Berlin Conference and the ‘Partition of Africa’, have led to the uncertainty as to which country the African diaspora could call ‘home’. Nonetheless, through DNA test some Africans in the Diaspora seek to determine their lineage to specific African countries like Lyndra Marshall who traces her ancestry to Ghana (Fehler, 2011). Indeed, the unveiling of the plaque by Barack Obama and Michelle Obama at the Cape Coast Castle further re-concretises the concept of ‘Door of Return’ for especially the African

Americans. As shown so far, the African Americans, however, bemoan the commercialisation of well-intentioned intangible activities such as PANAFEST and Emancipation Day celebrations.

Furthermore, visitors of the ‘old diaspora to Ghana are called ‘Obroni’, a Twi for White person, because of their markedly different socio-cultural traits (Bruner, 1996; Richards, 2005). The Diasporan Africans are frustrated, they actually want Ghanaians to welcome them as brothers and sisters. Falola (2013), nonetheless, cautions that it will be a naïve to assume that the different histories and experience of Africans and descendants of the old diaspora will suddenly melt into uncontested consanguinity. Williams (2015) thus avers heritage sites present space for epistemological contestations, where visitors, national actors and international organisations negotiate what needs to be preserved orally and materially. But there is also the dimension of the spiritual connection to events of the TAST represented by the agency of the Castle and its accessories captured by emotions that acts as a crude reminder of the transcendent reality we cannot trivialise. It is against this multiplicity of contestations on heritage tourism in Ghana that poetic analysis presents an alternative methodological approach to tease out trenchantly tourists’ experiences at heritage sites (see Figure, 2).

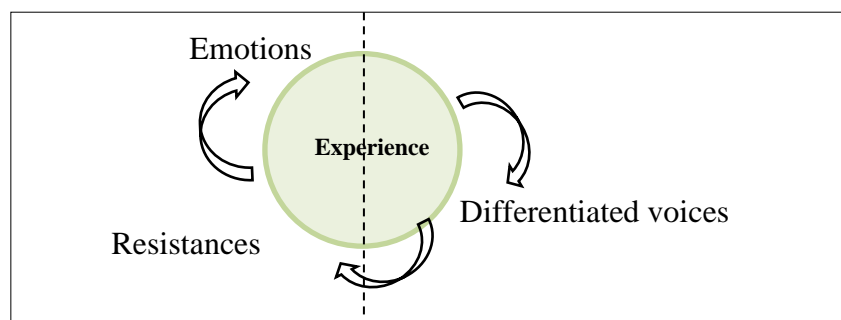


Figure 2. Interplay of emotions, voices and resistances on heritage tourism. Source: Authors’ Construct.

The poetic analysis adopted in this paper has sought to meld how emotions, differentiated voices and resistances are contested and presented different from the traditional qualitative approach, towards what Sidaway (2001:51) refers to as ‘alternative world picturing’.

Conclusion

The study has discussed some of the experiences of the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade that have been symbolically represented in Ghana’s Cape Coast Castle. For example, archaeological remains excavated in one of the dungeons in 1999 by Ghanaian archaeologists revealed faeces, shackles, bones and vomits that covered over 30cm thick on the dungeon floors of the Cape Coast Castle. Similar excavations in the dungeons showed large numbers of clay pipes used to administer tobacco to the captives to ‘drive away melancholia’— a condition of depression and sadness. It pinpointed how the actors of the ignominious activities strategically used religious doctrine and language to justify the slave trade. Presently, Cape Coast and Elmina Castles have turned into heritage tourists’ sites, particularly during the Pan-African Theatre biannual festival in Ghana. The study has considered the following major themes: emotions, transcendence, differentiated voices, and resistances that characterised tourists’ experiences of heritage tourism in the Castles in Ghana.

This study adopts a novel approach of poetic analysis that involved research and interpretative poems to analyse the transcribed data obtained from observation and in-depth-interviews of 50 informants selected through accidental sampling procedure. The study has shown that the use of poetic method provides a superior conduit to express complex, heteroglossic forms of reality than done by the conventional methodologies common in tourism



research. As such, the study has contributed to both local and international theories on heritage tourism.

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